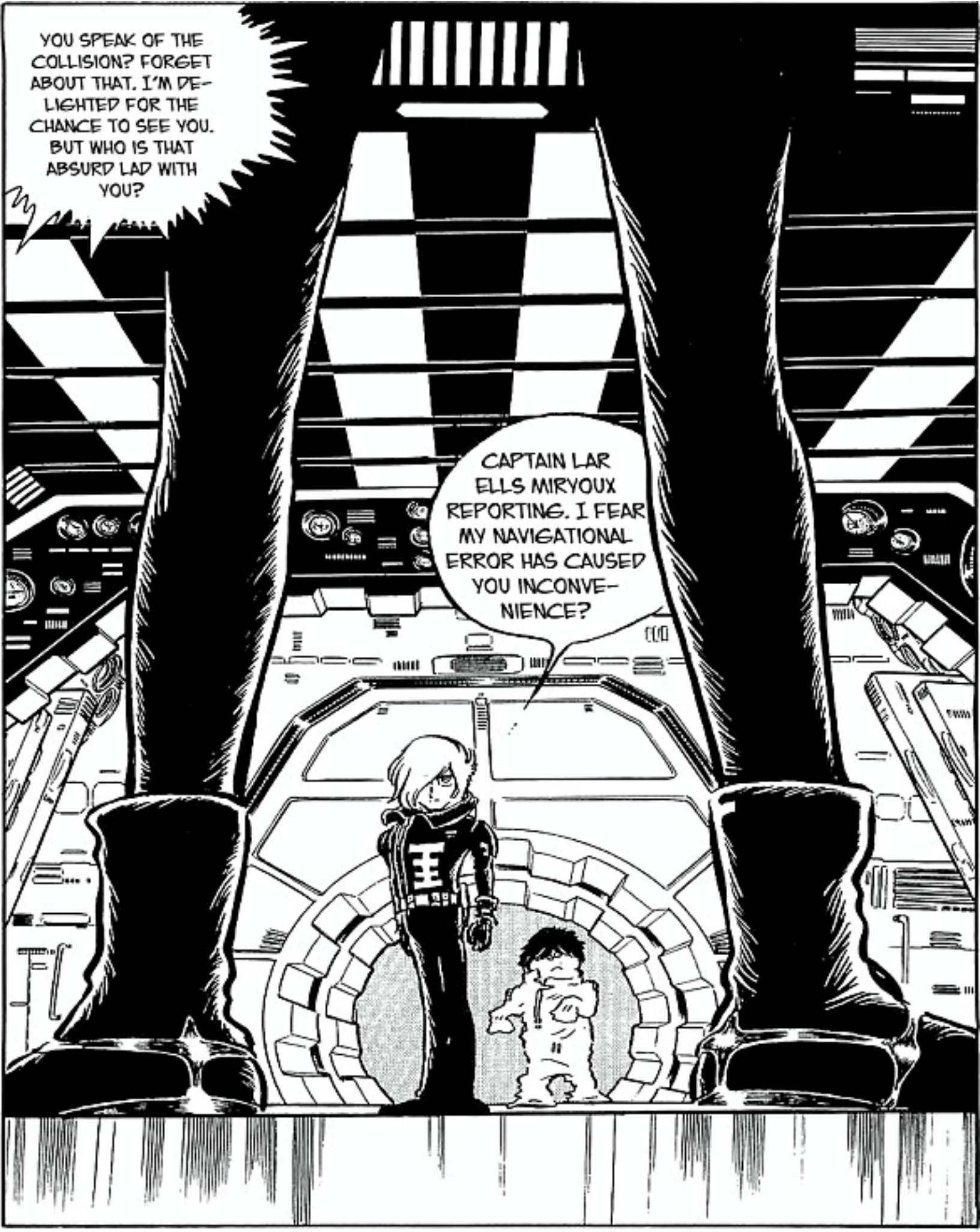
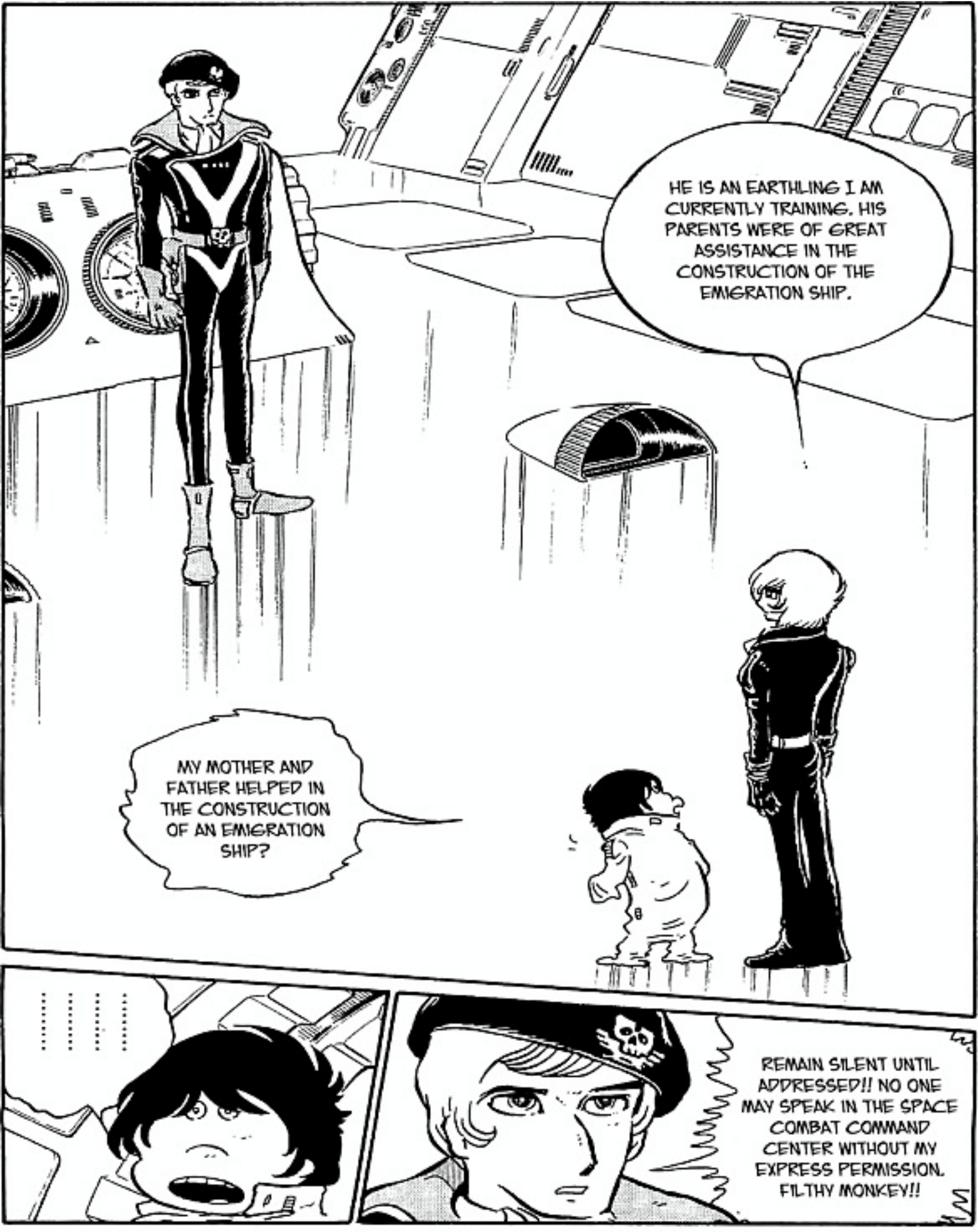

YOU SPEAK OF THE COLLISION? FORGET ABOUT THAT. I'M DE-LIGHTED FOR THE CHANCE TO SEE YOU. BUT WHO IS THAT ABSURD LAD WITH YOU?
CAPTAIN LAR ELLS MIRYOUX REPORTING. I FEAR MY NAVIGATIONAL ERROR HAS CAUSED YOU INCONVE-NIENCE?

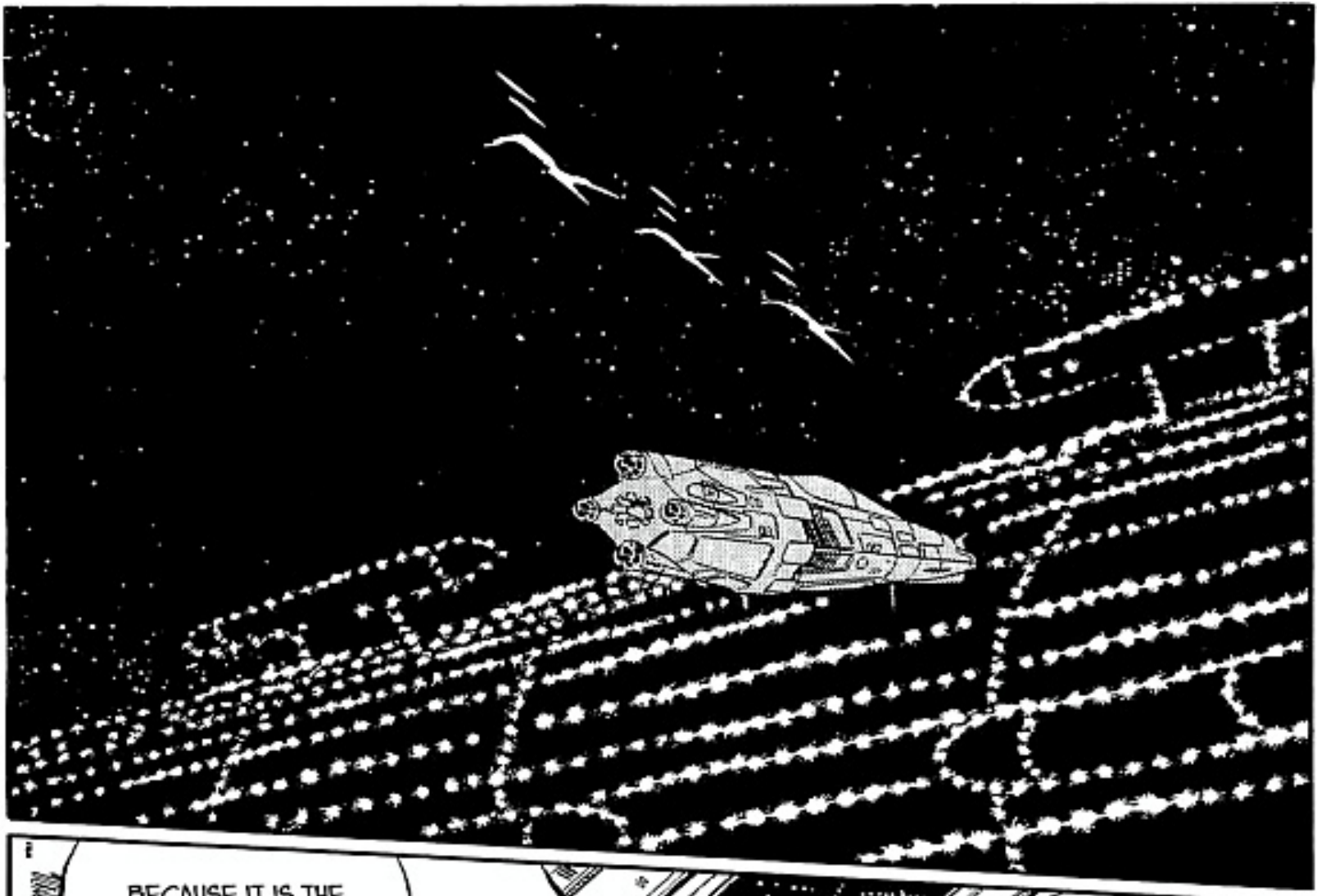

HE IS AN EARTHLING I AM CURRENTLY TRAINING. HIS PARENTS WERE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EMIGRATION SHIP.
MY MOTHER AND FATHER HELPED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN EMIGRATION SHIP?
.....
REMAIN SILENT UNTIL ADDRESSED!! NO ONE MAY SPEAK IN THE SPACE COMBAT COMMAND CENTER WITHOUT MY EXPRESS PERMISSION. FILTHY MONKEY!!

HASHWE AMAMORL THE NAME MY FATHER GAVE ME!!
BUT JUST IN CASE, WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
YOU WERE IN QUITE A HURRY. WHAT WAS YOUR NAVIGATIONAL OBJECTIVE?
SIR...
LAR ELLS MIRYOUX
WAS THAT AN ORDER?
TO APPROACH THE GREAT LAR AND ESPY THE SITUATION UP CLOSE.
WHO GAVE YOU LEAVE TO LOOK AWAY AND SMILE!? IT IS A BREACH OF ETIQUETTE!!
YES. WE TOOK OFF UNDER ORDERS FROM THE MILLENNIAL QUEEN

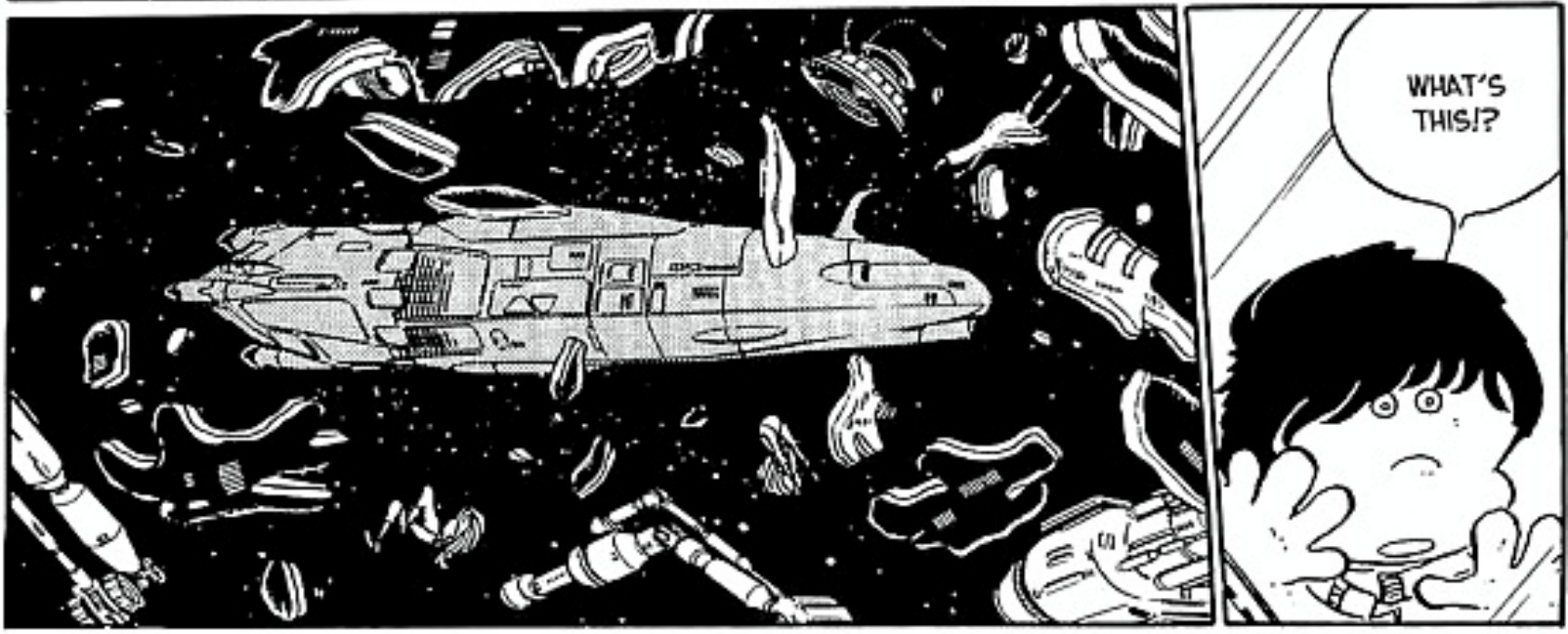
TAKE CARE NOT TO APPROACH TOO CLOSE.
MIRYOUX, THE REPAIRS ON YOUR SHIP WILL SOON BE COMPLETE. PROCEED AS PLANNED TO OBSERVE LAR.
MY APOLOGIES, COMMANDER.
YES. WE HOPED TO SHAKE THEM OFF IN WARP.
ARE YOU AWARE THAT YOUR SHIP WAS BEING FOLLOWED BY A WARSHIP OF THE MILLENNIAL THIEVES?
!!
THAT SHIP WAS DESTROYED SO THERE IS NO NEED FOR FURTHER CONCERN.
AS LONG AS YOU WERE AWARE, THERE IS NO PROBLEM.
LA-METAL IS CURRENTLY APPROACHING EARTH.
SPEAK
MAY I ASK YOU ONE QUESTION?
GLORY TO GREAT LA-METAL AND TO COMMANDER LAR FRANKEN BACH LEOPARDO!!
THAT IS NO CONCERN OF YOURS. GO!!
WHY HAS THE SPACE COMMAND POSITIONED ITSELF IN SPACE SO FAR FROM LA-METAL?

HASHIME!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WE'RE LEAVING!!
GOOD LUCK!!
SIR? HASHIME!?
DON'T YOU WANT TO LEAVE THAT HUMAN HERE?
SIR?
MIRYOUX
PET!!
IT MIGHT BE INTERESTING TO KEEP HIM AS A PET.
IS YOUR PRIDE WOUNDED? DON'T BE SO ANGRY, HASHIME.
I SEE. TOO BAD.
NO. HIS EDUCATION IS NOT COMPLETE. I WOULD NOT WISH TO IMPOSE ON YOU, SO I WILL TAKE HIM WITH ME.

I WAS RAISED ON EARTH. I THINK YOU AND I ARE THE SAME.
YAMORI...NO... LAR ELLS MIRYOUX... DO YOU SEE ME IN THE SAME WAY?
DON'T BE SILLY. THIS IS DIFFERENT THAN BEING PROUD OF ONE'S HEIGHT. THAT IS...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRY TO HIDE IT, HE HE.
QUEEN MILLENNIAL...YOU MEAN YAYOI?
HER MAJES-TY...
COMMANDER LEOPARDO IS THE COMMANDER OF HER MAJESTY'S IMPERI-AL GUARD. HE DOES NOT KNOW MUCH ABOUT EARTHLINGS.
I AM QUEEN MILLENNIAL'S MAN!!
? ? ? THERE SEEMS TO BE A QUEEN BEHIND EVERY BUSH AROUND HERE.
NO. HE IS KNIGHT OF THE IMPERIAL GUARDS OF THE SACRED QUEEN WHO GOVERNS PLANET LA-METAL. A CHIVALRIC ORDER.

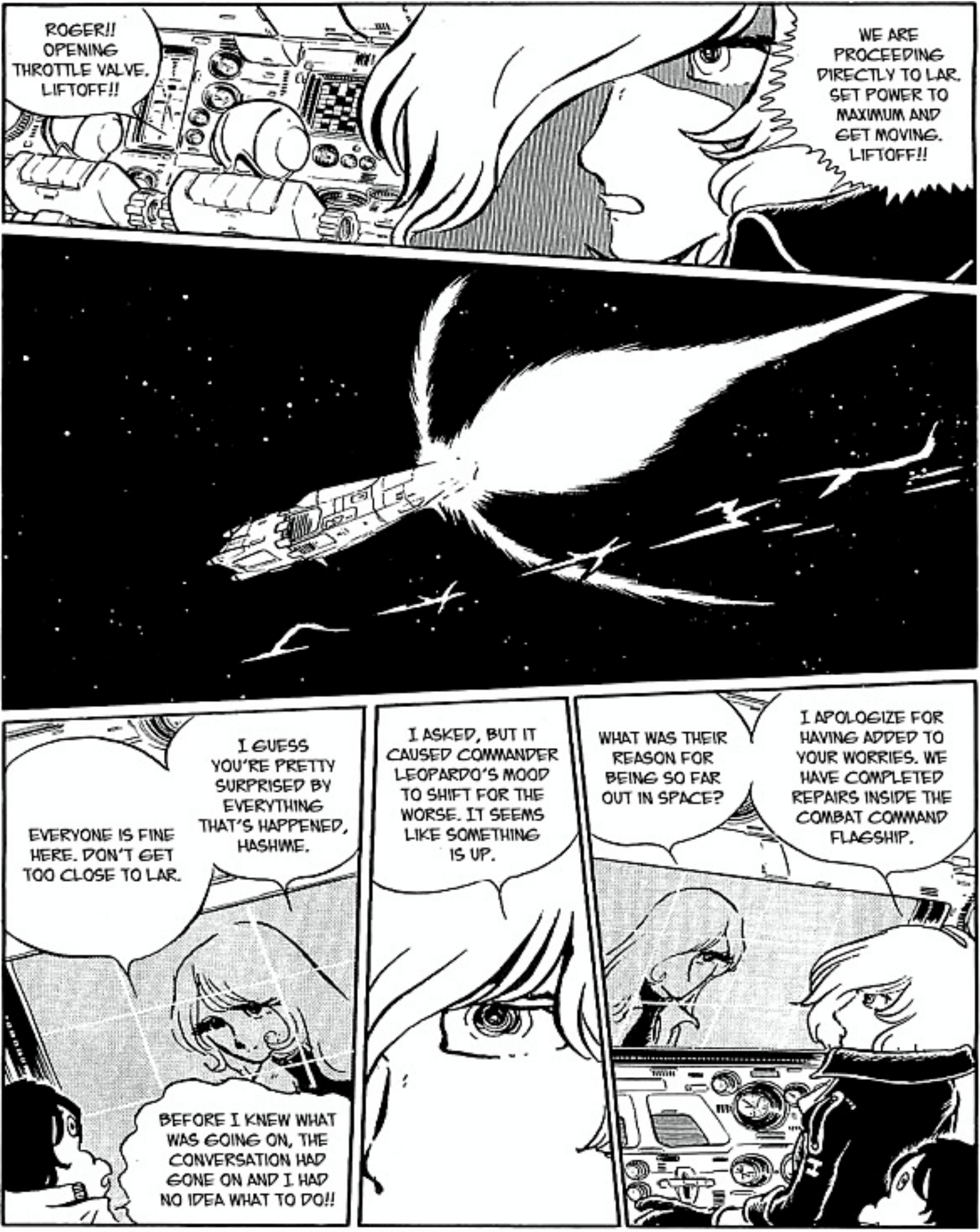


BECAUSE IT IS THE FLAGSHIP OF THE COMBAT COMMAND. IT IS CAMOUFLAGED.
THE LIGHTS ON THIS FLAGSHIP WOBBLE AND CHANGE SO IT'S HARD TO SEE ITS ENTIRE FORM.

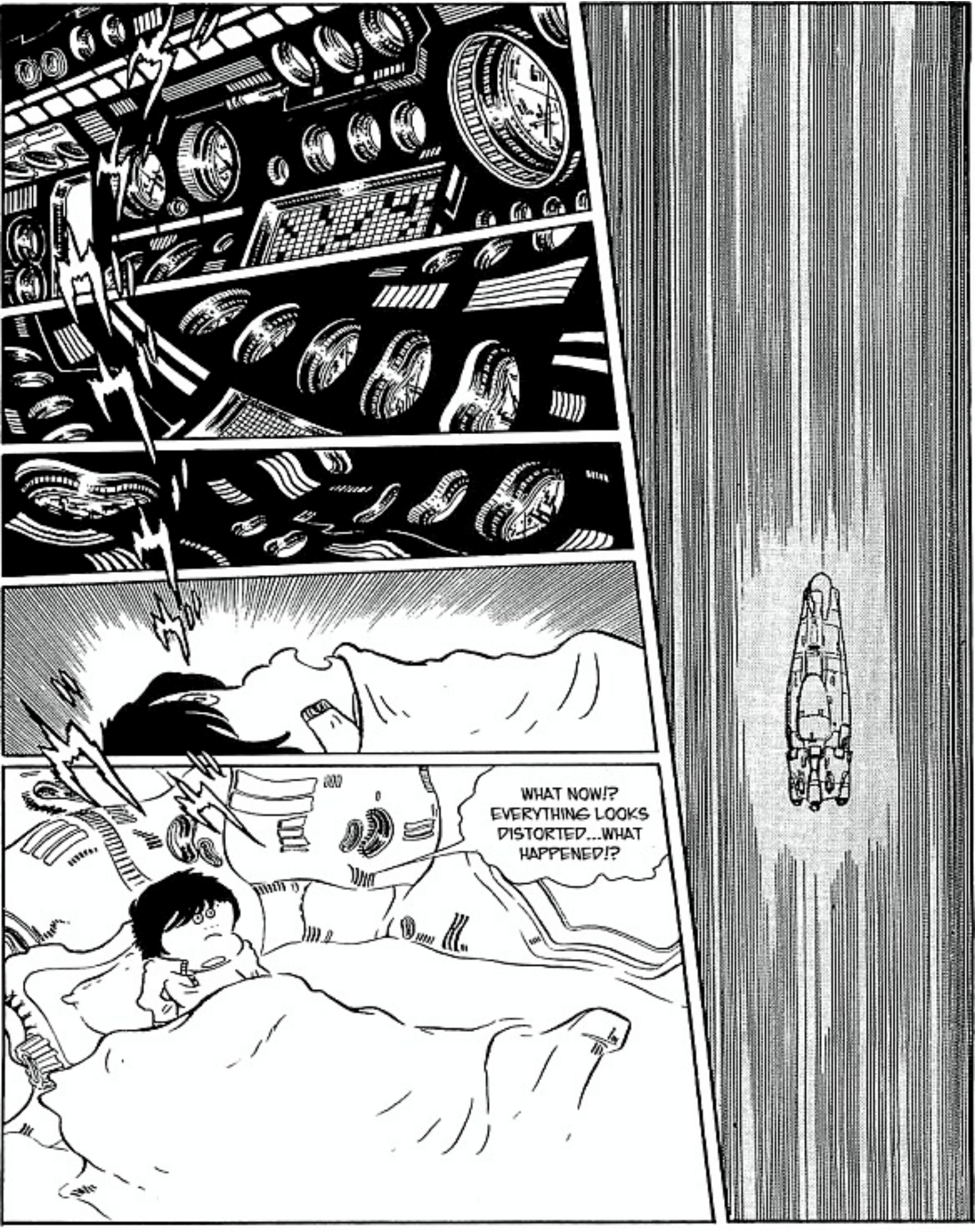

WHAT'S THIS!?

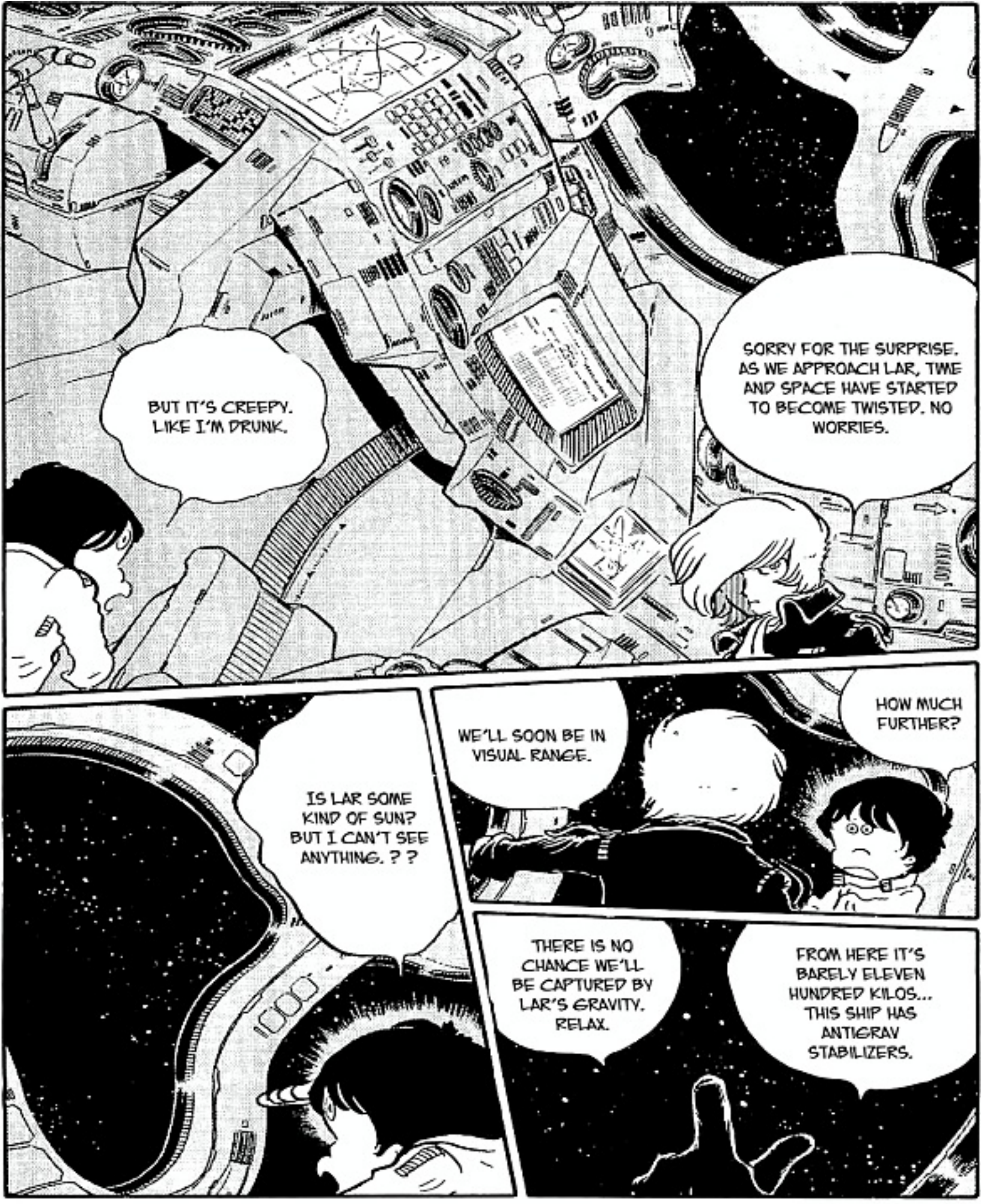
HOW MANY WERE ABOARD?
WHAT'S LEFT OF THE MILLENNIAL THIEVES' "TWO STARS". THEY CAME TOO CLOSE TO THE COMBAT COMMAND FLAGSHIP AND WERE DESTROYED.

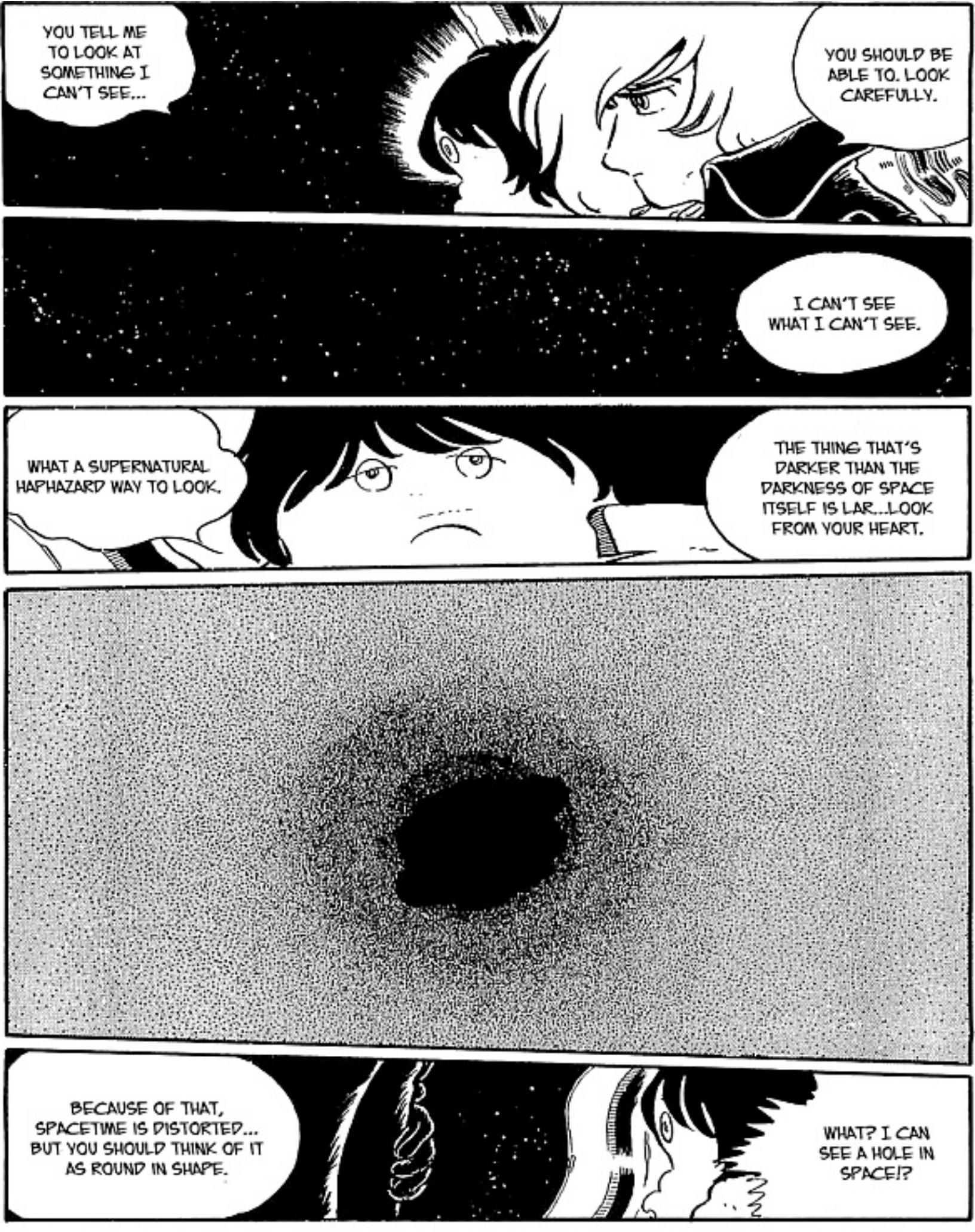
I THINK I'D RATHER GO HOME...
SIMPLY PUT, OUR ENEMIES!! YOU'LL UNDERSTAND SOON ENOUGH WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT. NOW, LET'S GO HAVE A LOOK AT THE GREAT LAR, HASHIME!!
I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE TWO SIDES, QUEEN MILLENNIAL AND THE MILLENNIAL THIEVES. BUT WHAT ARE THE MILLENNIAL THIEVES?
ABOUT A HUNDRED AND FIFTY...I SEE NO NEED TO HAVE DESTROYED THEM. BUT THE MOTHER-PLANET (LA-METAL) HAS DIFFERENT WAYS THAN OURS.

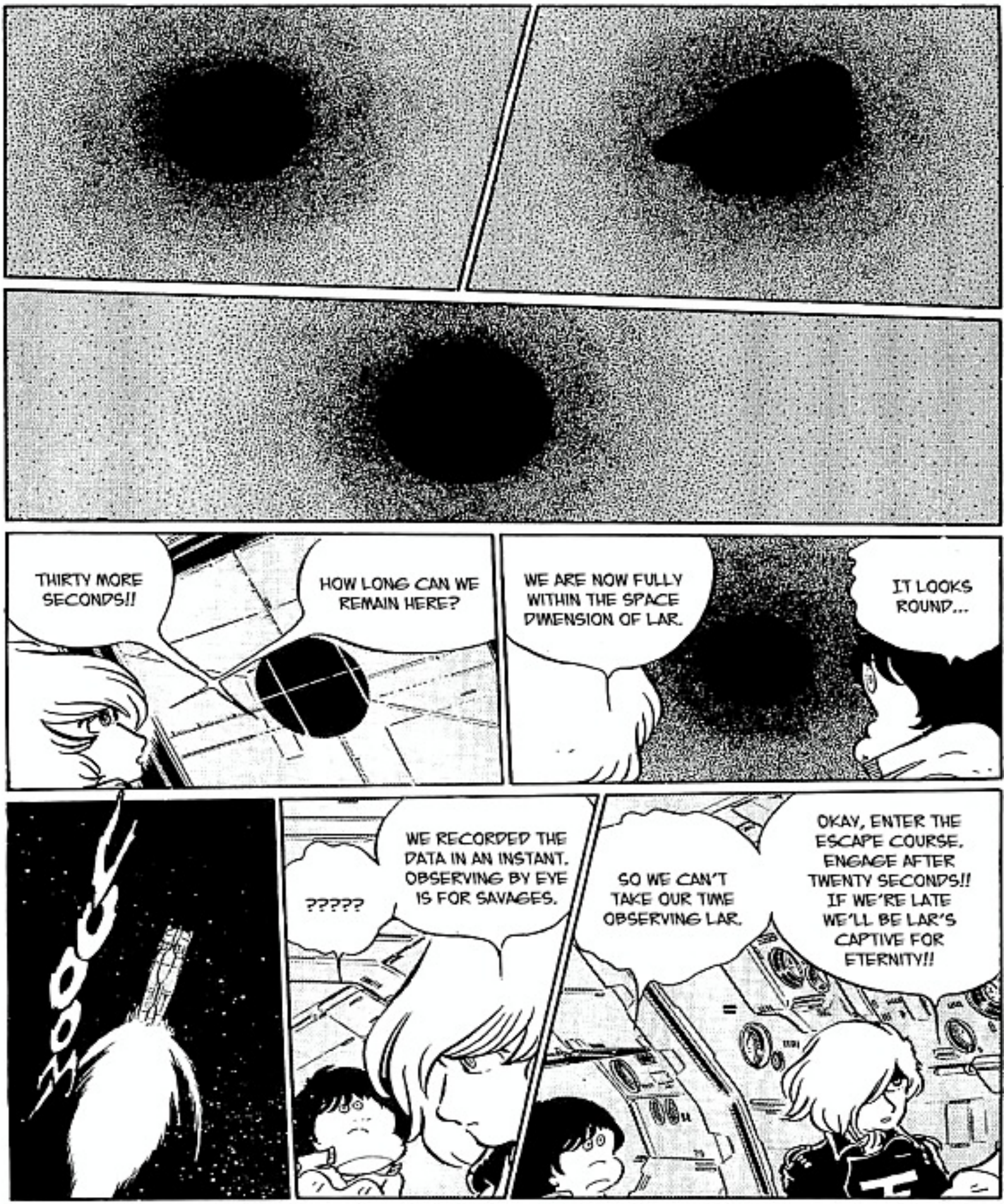

ROGER!! OPENING THROTTLE VALVE. LIFTOFF!!
WE ARE PROCEEDING DIRECTLY TO LAR. SET POWER TO MAXIMUM AND GET MOVING. LIFTOFF!!
I GUESS YOU'RE PRETTY SURPRISED BY EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED, HASHIME.
EVERYONE IS FINE HERE. DON'T GET TOO CLOSE TO LAR.
BEFORE I KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON, THE CONVERSATION HAD GONE ON AND I HAD NO IDEA WHAT TO DO!!
I ASKED, BUT IT CAUSED COMMANDER LEOPARDO'S MOOD TO SHIFT FOR THE WORSE. IT SEEMS LIKE SOMETHING IS UP.
WHAT WAS THEIR REASON FOR BEING SO FAR OUT IN SPACE?
I APOLOGIZE FOR HAVING ADDED TO YOUR WORRIES. WE HAVE COMPLETED REPAIRS INSIDE THE COMBAT COMMAND FLAGSHIP.

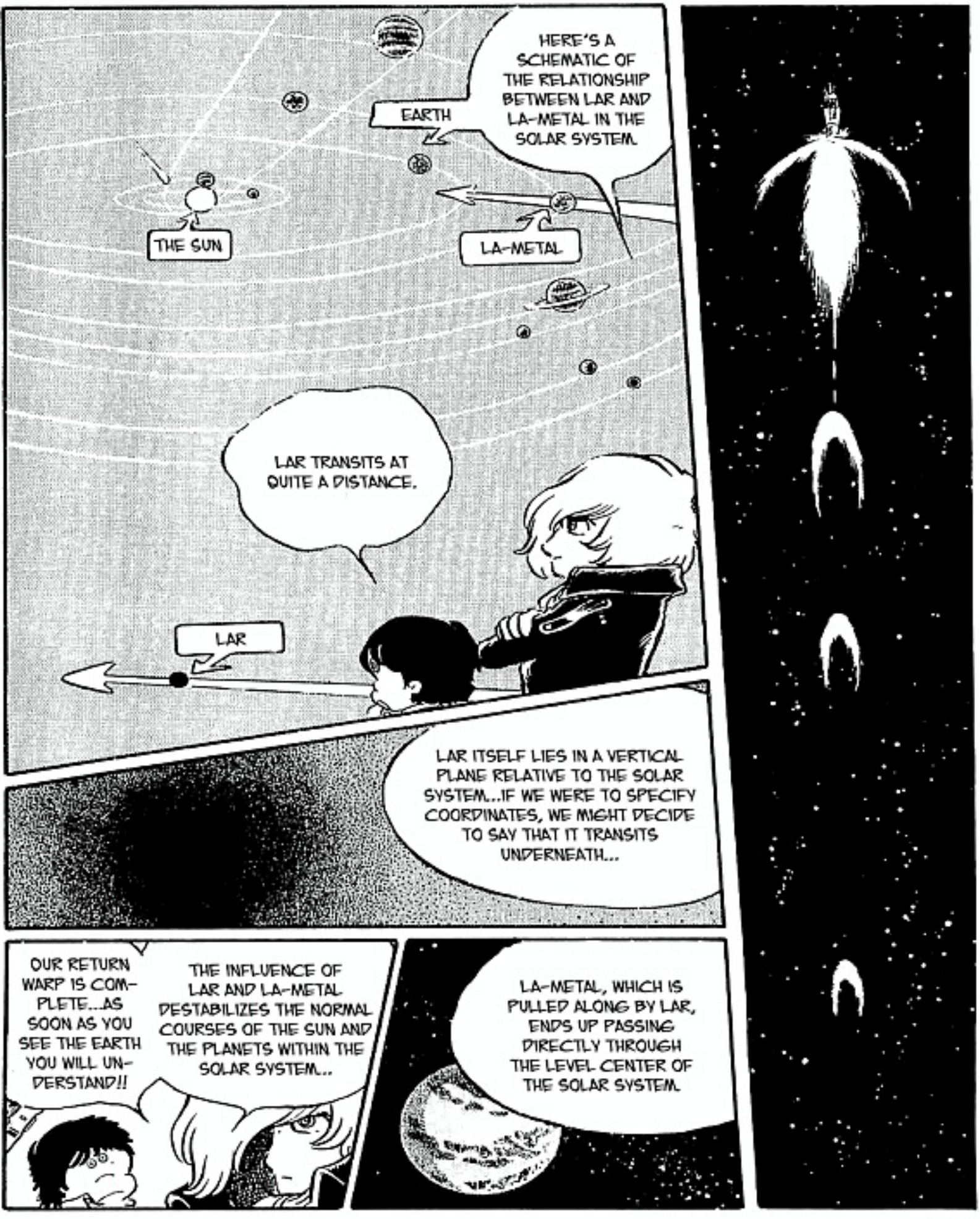
H- H- HUH...
SEE YOU LATER. YOU'LL CERTAINLY BE SURPRISED WHEN YOU GET HOME...
WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING?
IN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS WE'LL BE IN THE VICINITY OF LAR AND CAN APPROACH.
WE'VE INCREASED OUR VELOCITY, SO COMMUNICATION IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE.
ALL THAT KNOWLEDGE CRAMMED INTO MY HEAD BY MACHINE IS NO USE. THERE'S NOTHING TO DO.
RELAX, HUH...BUT EVERYTHING IS SO UNSETTLING TO BEGIN WITH. THERE'S NO WAY TO SLEEP.
RELAX AND GET SOME REST. IF YOU'RE HUNGRY I CAN ARRANGE FOR FOOD.
I DON'T REALLY GET HIM. I CAN'T TELL IF HE'S SHREWD OR AN IDIOT...BUT IT'S GOING WELL.
HOW'S HASHIME? HOW HAS IT GONE UP TILL NOW?


WHAT NOW!? EVERYTHING LOOKS DISTORTED...WHAT HAPPENED!?


SORRY FOR THE SURPRISE. AS WE APPROACH LAR, TIME AND SPACE HAVE STARTED TO BECOME TWISTED. NO WORRIES.
BUT IT'S CREEPY. LIKE I'M DRUNK.
HOW MUCH FURTHER?
WE'LL SOON BE IN VISUAL RANGE.
IS LAR SOME KIND OF SUN? BUT I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING. ? ?
FROM HERE IT'S BARELY ELEVEN HUNDRED KILOS... THIS SHIP HAS ANTIGRAV STABILIZERS.
THERE IS NO CHANCE WE'LL BE CAPTURED BY LAR'S GRAVITY. RELAX.


YOU TELL ME TO LOOK AT SOMETHING I CAN'T SEE...
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO. LOOK CAREFULLY.
I CAN'T SEE WHAT I CAN'T SEE.
WHAT A SUPERNATURAL HAPHAZARD WAY TO LOOK.
THE THING THAT'S DARKER THAN THE DARKNESS OF SPACE ITSELF IS LAR...LOOK FROM YOUR HEART.
BECAUSE OF THAT, SPACETIME IS DISTORTED... BUT YOU SHOULD THINK OF IT AS ROUND IN SHAPE.
WHAT? I CAN SEE A HOLE IN SPACE!?


THIRTY MORE SECONDS!!
HOW LONG CAN WE REMAIN HERE?
WE ARE NOW FULLY WITHIN THE SPACE DIMENSION OF LAR.
IT LOOKS ROUND...
ZOOM
?????
WE RECORDED THE DATA IN AN INSTANT. OBSERVING BY EYE IS FOR SAVAGES.
SO WE CAN'T TAKE OUR TIME OBSERVING LAR.
OKAY, ENTER THE ESCAPE COURSE. ENGAGE AFTER TWENTY SECONDS!! IF WE'RE LATE WE'LL BE LAR'S CAPTIVE FOR ETERNITY!!


HERE'S A SCHEMATIC OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAR AND LA-METAL IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM.
EARTH
THE SUN
LA-METAL
LAR TRANSITS AT QUITE A DISTANCE.
LAR
LAR ITSELF LIES IN A VERTICAL PLANE RELATIVE TO THE SOLAR SYSTEM...IF WE WERE TO SPECIFY COORDINATES, WE MIGHT DECIDE TO SAY THAT IT TRANSITS UNDERNEATH...
OUR RETURN WARP IS COMPLETE...AS SOON AS YOU SEE THE EARTH YOU WILL UNDERSTAND!!
THE INFLUENCE OF LAR AND LA-METAL DESTABILIZES THE NORMAL COURSES OF THE SUN AND THE PLANETS WITHIN THE SOLAR SYSTEM...
LA-METAL, WHICH IS PULLED ALONG BY LAR, ENDS UP PASSING DIRECTLY THROUGH THE LEVEL CENTER OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

EH!! THAT'S THE EARTH!?
HUH!? TOKYO IS...!!
LOOK AT THE KANTO PLAIN. THAT'S TOKYO. TOKYO!!
YOU COULD SAY THE CONTINENTS ARE DRIFTING. DUE TO THE EFFECT OF LAR AND LA-METAL!! EARTHQUAKES, VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS, UPLIFTS, CAVE-INS!! ON AN ENORMOUS SCALE NOT SEEN FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS, IT HAS BEGUN.
THE CRUST HAS EXPERIENCED A MASSIVE VIOLENT CHANGE.
AM I DREAMING...

●エッセイ

壮大で愛に溢れた物語

高橋克彦

この本が出版される頃には少し認識が変わっているかも知れないが、オウム真理教が起こしたものとされる事件が頻発して以来、今の若者に及ぼすサブカルチャーの悪影響ということが騒がれた。オウム真理教の行動の核を成しているものがサブカルチャーから導かれたものだと言うのである。私のところにもいくつかの雑誌がコメントを求めてきた。恥ずかしい話だが、サブカルチャーの悪影響と言われても当初はピンとこなかった。範囲が広過ぎて、その中のどれがオウム真理教を破滅の行動に駆り立てたのか見えてこない。ちなみに講談社の『日本語大辞典』からサブカルチャーの意味を引いてみよう。

「下位文化。ある社会の支配的・伝統文化に対し、非行少年・ヒッピー・若者など特定の社会集団に生まれ育つ独特の文化」、とある。

つまり、反社会的で低級で少数に支持されているものという感じだろうか。いかにもこれならオウム真理教のイメージに当てはまる。だが、質問者はオウム真理教がサブカルチャーだと言っているわけではなく、オウム真理教の信者となっている若者たちに悪影響を与えたサブカルチャーについてどう思うか、と質してきている。具体的にどんなものを指

しているのか、と私は訊ねた。オカルト小説を書いている私への皮肉ではないかと考えたからである。ノストラダムスの予言や超古代史の実在をテーマとすることは決して反社会的でも低級でもないつもりだが、少数に支持されているという点に関しては否定できない。ところが相手はまったく違うことを口にした。『宇宙戦艦ヤマト』とか『未来少年コナン』などのアニメのことなのである。コスモクリーナーはヤマトに登場するものであるし、オウム真理教の幹部たちは自らをヤマトの搭乗員に見立てたアニメを制作し、コナンのストーリーをそのまま機関誌に掲載している、と相手は例を並べ立て、なんとイージーで底の浅い宗教だと思いませんかと矛先を向けてきた。

断じて思わないし、マンガはもはやサブカルチャーではない、と私は応じた。そう信じ込んでいる相手の方こそイージーで底が浅い。私は決してオウム真理教の行動を認める者ではないが、それを支える若者たちの底辺にヤマトやコナンの物語が存在しているとするなら、むしろまだ救いがあると確信する。いかにも戦闘場面の連続だ。けれど、芯になっているのは地球や人類に対する高潔な愛であり、犠牲の精神だ。美しい魂の数々が群れ集っている。それをマンガだという理由だけで低級と決め付ける神経が私には分からない。確かに自分たちをヤマトの搭乗員に見立てたアニメを制作し、それを勧誘の素材とするのは行き過ぎと映るかも知れない。しかしオウム真理教の目指している道をこれほど分かりやすく伝えるものはなかろう。ヤマトに似た宇宙船、その操縦室に居並ぶ人間の理想は人

類への愛とすぐに連想が働くからだ。悪賢いやり方だと呆れても、すなわち低級とは言えないはずだ。若者のほとんどがヤマトを見て共感を覚えている。すでにヤマトは若者たちの共通の文化にまで成長している。古今東西に関わらず宗教は分かりやすい言葉で説かれるのが原則である。哲学は思想となり得ても宗教とはならない。行動は別としてオウム真理教の布教方法は現代に合致したものだった。それをサブカルチャーの悪影響と見做す側の方こそ認識不足というものだ。マンガを読んでいるような連中ばかりが関わっている宗教なんてロクなものじゃないという先入観に支配されている。

なんでこんなことを延々と書いているかと言えば、腹を立てているのである。松本零士を汚された気がしたからだ。松本零士はキャラのデザインに関わっているだけで原作者ではないが、ストーリーには彼の影響が随所に見られる。歴史観や愛は正しく松本零士から引き継いだものだ。それを低級と断じられては黙って引き下がるわけにはいかない。恐らく質問者はマンガ嫌いで松本零士の本質を知らなかっただけに違いないけれど、あまりにも傲慢な断定というしかない。『ザ・コクピット』で松本零士が描き上げた戦争の虚しさと人間の精神の素晴らしさに匹敵する物語を我々はいくつ知っているだろうか。『男おいどん』に見られる日本という国の哀しさとつつましさを他のだれが示しているだろう。そして『銀河鉄道999』で謳われた無限と夢幻の結合。これをマンガと軽んじて切り捨てる人間を私は信用しない。